



BOARD INFO

MEMORANDUM

December 30, 2011

TO: Mayor and Board of Directors

FROM: Ray Gosack, City Administrator

SUBJECT: 2011 Key Accomplishments

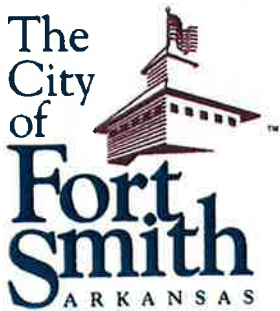
2011 has been a productive year for the City of Fort Smith. Although we experienced economic uncertainties from the national recession, the city government has many accomplishments in its service to the citizens and businesses of Fort Smith. A list of key accomplishments is attached. They're listed in no particular order with the hope that you'll review the entire list.

The support and leadership from the mayor and board of directors were instrumental in these accomplishments. The department heads and employees at all levels are committed to the board's goals and made substantial contributions to these accomplishments.

2012 will be another challenging year. With the board's guidance and the staff's professionalism, we can make 2012 a successful year on behalf of the citizens we serve.

Ray

Attachment



CITY OF FORT SMITH

2011 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Golden Living announced that Fort Smith will be the home of its consolidated administrative center. The move adds 200 new jobs.
- Fort Smith was named the least expensive city for living in the U.S. by *Forbes* magazine.
- Roadway construction work for the widening of Highway 45 between Phoenix Ave. and Zero St. began. Work on the \$13.4 million project will be completed by fall 2012.
- Fort Smith was named a City of Distinction, honorable mention, in the Main Street Preservation category by Arkansas Business Week newspaper. The recognition was for the city's work to revitalize Garrison Ave. into a shopping, entertainment and residential town center.
- The city began an efficiency study of its water and sewer operations to identify opportunities for improvement. The study will be completed early next year.
- Funding for the construction of I-49 through Chaffee Crossing and southward to U.S. Highway 71 continued.
- Mitsubishi Heavy Industries completed construction of its 200,000 square foot manufacturing facility valued at \$45 million in Fort Smith. The plant is expected to employ approximately 330 workers at full production. The city supported the recruitment by constructing a roadway, extending water and sewer mains, waiving permit fees, and authorizing the use of industrial revenue/recovery zone facility bonds.
- Using federal stimulus funds, the city completed the conversion of traffic signals to LED technology, and undertook building improvements at fire and police stations. All of this will reduce the city's energy consumption and lower operating costs.



- The last of the solid waste bonds was retired, making the sanitation fund free of any long-term debt for the first time in 20 years.
- Many volunteers enhanced the beautification of Fort Smith by adding roses along the Garrison Ave. streetscape, trees at the I-540/Rogers Ave. interchange, clearing non-native species from the Ruth Armstrong Nature Area, and neighborhood associations adopting 2 landscaped medians at Sebastian Hills and Fianna Hills.
- Approximately 160 residential lots are under various stages of development. The city grew by annexing 325 acres for mostly residential development during 2011.
- Conducted the 11th annual Creekmore Holiday Express with an estimated 22,000 citizens attending the attractions at Creekmore Park during December.
- The city received an Innovation Award for the geographic information systems (GIS) applications on the web site. The applications give citizens access to a wide variety of useful information about services.



- Transit ridership increased 3.3% during 2011. The transit dept. has undertaken numerous passenger service enhancements using federal stimulus funds. Transit improvements include 25 additional bus stop shelters, iPads on buses to help support local green initiatives, a new fueling station, 20 bay bus canopy, automated bus wash and renovation for the transit department office and maintenance facilities.
- The city created an evidenced based pharmacy benefit for city employees which reduced the annual cost by more than \$300,000. This was done in partnership with the Employers Health Coalition, The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences School of Pharmacy and RxResults.
- The animal services task force conducted an exhaustive review of Fort Smith's animal control problems and existing ordinances. The task force made numerous recommendations.
- Fort Smith retained its ISO class 2 fire insurance rating, which was first attained more than 10 years ago. The favorable rating results in lower insurance premiums for property owners and is a reflection of quality public safety services.
- Continued construction of a \$35 million upgrade to the Lake Fort Smith water

treatment plant. The upgrade will modernize and expand the plant, which was first constructed in the mid 1930's. Work will be completed in spring, 2012.

- The city was granted a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Assn. for the 26th consecutive time. This is the highest award given for governmental financial reporting.
- The Chamber of Commerce presented its 2011 Green Business Award to the City of Fort Smith. The recognition was given for the city's new development standards, energy efficiency in municipal operations, and transit service improvements which increased ridership.
- Completed construction of a new cell at the landfill for \$1.9 million which will meet solid waste disposal needs through 2015.
- City Administrator Ray Gosack was elected vice president of the Arkansas City Management Assn. He'll likely be elected president of the organization in mid 2012.
- Continued operation of The Park at West End to attract residents and visitors to downtown Fort Smith. More than 22,000 rides were given on the historic Ferris wheel and carousel.
- Completed construction of the \$4.3 million in improvements on the South 28th St./Cavanaugh Rd./Mill Creek project to reduce the occurrence of flooding and improve traffic movements.
- Conducted 3 sessions of the citizens academies program through fire and administration – graduating approximately 70 citizens. These academies develop better relationships between city government and residents.
- The Fort Smith utilities dept. laboratory was re-certified by the Arkansas Dept. of Health, and is one of only 4 certified water utility labs in Arkansas.
- Received a national award for the I-40 corridor information sharing network. The network was organized and led by the FSPD, and includes state and local agencies in Arkansas and Oklahoma. It shares real-time information about potential criminal activity along the nation's major east/west



highway corridor.

- Continued construction of \$180 million in improvements to the sanitary sewer system to reduce the occurrence of sewer backups, overflows and untreated discharges during periods of heavier rainfalls. Completed the Sunnymede equalization basin, which includes a multi-use recreation trail.
- Transferred operation of the Fort Smith Convention Center to the Advertising and Promotion Commission for more coordinated marketing of the meeting and entertainment venue.
- Jeff Dingman was selected as Fort Smith's new deputy city administrator following a nationwide search with nearly 100 applicants.
- Implementation of automated refuse collection entered its fifth year with 3,300 more households added to the program. The program streamlines the collection of garbage, improves the appearance of neighborhoods, provides same-day service for all collections, and reduces the potential for litter.
- The city was granted a distinguished budget presentation award from the Government Finance Officers Assn. for the 23rd consecutive time. This is the highest award given for governmental budgeting.
- Fort Smith was named an Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year for 2011. This was the 13th time and the 7th consecutive year for Fort Smith to receive this honor.
- Improved neighborhood infrastructure by resurfacing 22.7 lane miles of neighborhood streets; and reconstructing and repairing 2.2 miles of public sidewalk.
- Added the McClure Amphitheater at Chaffee Crossing to the city's parks and recreation offerings through a cooperative agreement with the Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority.



- Dedicated the first phase of the Old Railroad Trail between Free Ferry Rd. and Sweet Ave. with the help of volunteers and a state grant.

- The development services department partnered with World Changers, a network of Southern Baptist and other evangelical churches, to make roofing and exterior repairs to 16 homes in Fort Smith.
- Downtown Fort Smith saw private investment of over \$4.8 million, 14 new residences, and 8 new businesses. The CBID, Chamber of Commerce and City are working jointly to market the downtown riverfront. Two new large public events, Festival on the Border and Heritage Festival, were added to the downtown entertainment offerings this year.
- The city launched new citizen communications initiatives including quarterly neighborhood board meetings, a monthly e-newsletter (*Fast Focus*), a Facebook page, and small group listening meetings with a diversity of citizens. The goal is to strengthen trust and to build communications tools and resources for city representatives and citizens.
- Director of development services Wally Bailey was appointed to the board of directors for the National Institute of Building Sciences. The institute is an authoritative source of advice for building science and technology. It brings together a variety of stakeholders to address building process and facility performance problems.
- The fire dept. was one of only 2 fire departments in Arkansas to receive the *Above and Beyond Award* from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. The award was made for the department's support of its members who serve in the National Guard and Reserves.